

April 2005



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LONE STAR DRAFT

REview

Racing just keeps getting cheaper and cheaper, and it's because all of our members are doing everything they can to help contain the cost of putting on events.

Start with one part humor, add two parts bull#\$%&, and you get statements like that - what can I tell you. It reads a lot better than "The cost of putting on an event gets higher every year, and many of our members are too busy dealing with their personal cost of fielding an entry to worry about the cost of the event itself."

The fact is that the cost of putting on an event can range \$65,000 (as in the case of the LSR Double National in January 2004), to \$33,000 (as for the LSR Extended Regional in January 2005). Some of the line items in a race budget are immutable. Some can be reduced, with some creativity and the right circumstances. And some are entirely discretionary.

Let's start with the largest line items. The race track and bundled services (wreckers and emergency services, etc) are going to cost just under \$19,000 for a two day event. Add the third day necessary to run a Double National, and it jumps to nearly \$27,000. They are the only game in town, and until and unless that changes, this constitutes the immutable component.

If we run a Regional event of any kind, whether it be (i) a full day event on Saturday, or (ii) a Restricted Regional event for just one or two 'regional only' classes on Sunday, we pay (a) a minimum sanction fee of \$300 (plus an extra \$5 for every car over 150 in number), (b) \$1,486 for liability insurance, (c) a minimum of \$1,650 for participant insurance (plus an extra \$30

for every car over 55 in number). *Minimum* sanction and insurance = \$3,436.

If we run a National event, we pay (a) a minimum sanction fee of \$550 (plus an extra \$5 for every car over 150 in number), (b) \$1,486 for liability insurance, (c) a minimum of \$2,850 for participant insurance (plus an extra \$30 for every car over 95 in number). *Minimum* sanction and insurance = \$4,886.

These are areas where we have applied some creativity on our race formats in order to reduce costs. In our January 2004 Extended Regional, we ran the entire weekend in a qualifying session / qualifying race / qualifying race / points race format all under one sanction number - *at a cost of over \$7,000 less than a Double Regional!* The event (including merchandising) produced positive cash flow of under \$1,000. Without merchandising, the event broke even. *As a traditional Double Regional, the event would have lost us about \$7,000.*

Likewise, for our Memorial Day event this year, we plan to again deploy a creative format to provide two full days of racing for both regional only and national classes, under only two sanction numbers (instead of the traditional R/N/RR format under three sanction numbers) for projected savings of nearly \$5,000

Discretionary spending is a much smaller component of the overall cost to produce a race event. It includes line items like worker perks, race party, complimentary hotel rooms, etc. Many of these items are traditional and considered blasphemy to mess with - until now. There has been a past perception that throwing trinkets at our fellow members for staffing races is an effective way for drivers to show appreciation. I don't agree, and will do another

REview (continued from page 1)

whole column on that subject in the future. For now, suffice it to say that quite a bit has been done to bring discretionary spending under control, for a significant cost reduction.

So, it's all under control, right? Nothing left for you to do, eh? Not so. Cutting expenses can only get us so far. We need to look at options on the revenue side as well. That's code for 'sponsorship'.

I have just received from SCCA Corporation, the latest demographic survey of SCCA members, and we are a pretty

attractive group, from a marketer's perspective. And... this survey gives us the ammunition to prove it to any prospective sponsor. I can think of at least two good race sponsorship opportunities right now. You probably have some, too.

When I look at what this board has done over the last few months, and try to think of whom within that group has the bandwidth to take on more, in order to capitalize on those opportunities, with these tools, and I don't see an answer. Hopefully, a new face will show up at the next board meeting, or contact someone on the board before that, and be willing to lead a sponsorship and marketing committee to ex-

plot some of the opportunities.

Last year our Memorial Day race had around 190 entrants each day. One \$5,000 sponsor for this year and we could reduce entry fees by another \$25. Please see the LSR website at www.lonestarscca.org/who.htm for contact information for all of the officers and board members if you prefer shaping circumstances to complaining about them. There are opportunities on the table.

Cliff

May Race

It's never too late to Volunteer!

HELP! We need help but we don't need you all day!! If you are available, or if you know someone who might be willing to come join us, of course we can keep you busy all day! But how about between races? Or just for a day? Think about it - can you:

- ...help do photo IDs at registration Friday evening? Saturday morning?
- ...help make copies of provisional grids, grids, provisional results, results any time on Saturday or Sunday in the Drivers Lounge?
- ...man the merchandize table in the Drivers Lounge for 2 hours Saturday or Sunday? Or Friday night at Registration?
- ...work a corner? Even for half a day?
- ...help in timing & scoring? Just two sessions?
- ...help tech during impound after each race?
- ...help get equipment out Saturday and Sunday mornings?
- ...help get food and beverages to the party Saturday night?
- ...help get everything picked up and put away Sunday at the end of the day?
- ...stop and eat pizza with us Sunday night? It's our treat if you've helped anytime during the weekend!!!

Think about it - yes, it does take a village (or a region) to raise a child (or put on a race)! Can't access the web (www.lonestarscac.org) to email us? Give one of us a call - Mark VonBargen (990-0273, mvonbargen@gia.net), Cliff Maxwell (512-259-5494, cmaxwell@att.net), Kerry McEntire (512-237-2161, star-chart@jetemail.net), or Paula Taylor (338-4008, racemom13@hotmail.com) - TODAY and let us tell you how you can help!



Coming Up:

- April 2-3—Regional/National races, TWS, hosted by Houston Region
- April 6 – Lone Star Region Board Meeting (www.lonestarscca.org for details)
- May 4 – Lone Star Region Board Meeting (www.lonestarscca.org for details)
- May 7-8—Regional/National races, TMS, hosted by Texas Region
- May 28-29—Regional/National races, TWS, hosted by Lone Star Region
- June 1 – Lone Star Region Board Meeting (www.lonestarscca.org for details)
- June 25-26—School/Regional races, No Problem Raceway, hosted by Houston Region
- July 6 – Lone Star Region Board Meeting (www.lonestarscca.org for details)

The Care and Feeding of Stewards

Jim Averett, SOWDIV Executive Steward

Unless you are extremely lucky, one day you will be called to talk to the steward(s). Often this is not because of something you have done, but because of something another driver or worker did. Rule #1 when speaking with a steward: attitude counts! You may find this hard to believe, but we do not enjoy penalizing drivers.

The worst case scenario in dealing with a steward is answering a black flag in the hot pits. First of all, we throw the black flag only after much consideration. We know that stopping for a black flag will probably cause you to lose your race. We will not black flag you unless we are certain of an infraction. If we black flag you and you do not come in, you will open yourself for a whole bunch of problems. The CS will have timing and scoring stop scoring you. From that point on, your laps are not counting. You will also be penalized for disobeying the order of an official, ignoring flags, plus whatever it was that caused the black flag. You may also face a driver's review for poor eyesight.

So you've seen the black flag with your number displayed, and decide to come in. A steward will meet you in the hot pits and probably tell you what you did. This is no time to argue! Say "yes sir" or "no sir" as the situation dictates and you will soon be on your way. If you argue, the steward may pull out his GCR and start reading it to you. Usually if you comply with a black flag, that will be your only penalty.

If you are leaving the track after a session, and a steward hands you a note or asks you to report, do so as soon as possible. The steward is looking for some information about an on course incident that you may have seen or been a part of. He may also inform you that he has taken action against you. Timely reporting is important in case you want to protest the action, since there is a time limit (more about that next time).

If you are involved in a protest or CS Request for Action, you will be asked to report to the SOM at a particular time and place. You will then be told the details of the action that may or may not be against you (you may just be a witness). In all dealings with the stewards be truthful and direct. If you want to get on the bad side of a steward, lie to him!

We would prefer to talk to you on a personal basis at the party, but if we have to speak with you officially, it is not the end of the world. We all make mistakes. If I have to penalize you, you do not automatically become one of the "bad guys." We know that in racing, stuff happens!

Lone Star Region Board Minutes

SCCA Lone Star Region

March 2, 2005 Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:14pm

Attendees: BOD/officers: Danny Benzer, Cliff Maxwell, Ed Gilfus, Mark Von Bargen, Kerry McEntire, Antonio Garza,

Lone Star Draft editor: Paula Taylor

Previous Meeting Minutes: distributed and approved through e-mail

Treasurer Report: distributed and approved. (Kerry distributed the signature approval form to Antonio, Cliff, and Danny).

Race report:

January race had 129 entries, sold \$1265 in merchandise. There is some work left to do on inventory and there is some outstanding petty cash (~\$400). Looks like a \$1540 loss so far before adjustments to inventory and merchandise. The

estimate is \$450 positive cash flow after adjustments. (later Mark clarified that it's about \$500 petty cash coming back).

Open board items:

Temporary memberships. Danny explained that non-responsiveness (or slow response) on this issue. Motion by Cliff to mail in the memberships as payment to SCCA National using certified mail with a cover letter stating "...per Mike Dickerson" etc. 2nd. Antonio passed unanimous.

Other issues:

-There was a discussion of assets and depreciation and whether we have been doing this correctly. It's believed that we haven't been depreciating the assets and it doesn't affect our tax expense either way, but we should clear this to clean up the balance sheet. Also we need to investigate franchise taxes. Cliff and Danny will report storage inventory at the next meeting and at the next race we'll take inventory of the race trailer.

Continued on page 4

Lone Star Region Board Minutes (continued from page 3)

–There are no minutes for April-May 2004. Mark found June-July but couldn't print due to PC problems. We'll have to write a statement that April-May 2004 minutes have been lost.

–Merchandise sales at January race. Tally sheets were lost.

–Jim Averett asked LSR to give an opinion on how we feel about website advertising on the SOWDIV website. After discussion it was decided that our opinion should reflect what we'd like to see on our own website which is we'd like to keep a clean front page but a classifieds page with paying advertisers and free member advertisements. We also did not want any rotating banners or pop-ups on the main page.

–Mark related that Jack Turner proposed co-hosting a driver's school with SCCA where Jack gets only \$250 per driver, there is no track rental, and we can add a fee on top of the \$250 for SCCA expenses. The fee would be reduced for more than 10 cars at \$225 and lower for a higher numbers, with details to be provided later. Discussion resulted in some questions regarding co-sanction and membership requirements for the students (are temporary memberships adequate for a Novice permit, etc.) Jack will be expecting a response from Cliff.

–Alamo region status. We're still waiting on a response from national regarding our stance. Paula did mention that Terry Whittle passed away recently and he was the one that kept that region together. Paula asked a question to an Alamo region person and got a very curt response stating Alamo Region will never go away.

–Tax situation. Antonio presented some preliminary info but it's not clear whether the law has changed since our incorporation and current IRS publications do not clearly define what our classification should be. Cliff and Bill know people that might be able to shed some light at no cost.

–Kerry requested closure on the domain name registration cost. A motion was extended, 2nd, and approved to pay the domain name registration for 7 years at \$13.50/year

May Race

–Mark mentioned that for the May race, there will be some kind of event at MSR and this will keep a lot of workers from the Texas Region. It's not a NASA event but it's possible it's Formula Mazda series event. It was decided to proceed as planned on the 2.9ccw course and have 1.8ccw as an alternative (as always disclose in the supps/entry that shortage of workers will preclude the use of the 2.9 course) and it must remain as ccw because of SCCA's policy on changing course direction.

–Mark also brought up that our blue flags are too faded and we need to purchase some. It was mentioned that other regions have new flags and we should borrow them to keep costs down. A motion was brought forward by Cliff to borrow the flags from Houston region. Bill 2nd that motion, passed unanimous. Also, as far as more permanent

arrangements a motion was made to table the discussion for discussion at the next SOWDIV meeting. Passed unanimous.

–May race format will be regional/national with 1 restricted regional group (SM/IT)

–Race registration. We need to keep pursuing the success based registration fee with Colin/Donovan because a 3-event race at \$450 is too much money. \$1 per entrant was suggested.

–We should add a line in the entry form for a t-shirt (also place t-shirt picture/logo in the entry) in order to pre-order t-shirts. This could help keep leftovers to a minimum.

–Paula asked if there could be free entry for military service people and their families since the race is on Memorial Day weekend. It was agreed that it was a good idea and we should proceed.

LSR website

–Antonio requested a formal recommendation from the BOD/officers on this by motioning the following: to have a clean main page and a classifieds section. Motion 2nd by Cliff and unanimous.

–We need to come up with a rate card, how to maintain it, etc. Also we need to keep up to date on the minutes and will try to start having agendas posted in advance of monthly meetings.

–Somewhat related to the website is the monthly newsletter. We should get advertisers for it. Also, we should give a 2 month opt-out period for those that want to receive the *Lone Star Draft* in e-mail form.

Miscellaneous

–Mark gave Cliff an addendum from TWS for him to read and sign. Cliff has to sign it and send it to Jack Turner.

–Tech guys still don't have their SRO points. People are starting to get their stuff already. Mark will contact Jake to get the tech people at the next race.

Meeting adjourned 9:25pm

Respectfully submitted

Antonio Garza
Secretary

April 6, 2005 Board Meeting Minutes

Call to order, 7:10pm, Athena Mfg.

Attendees: Cliff, Mark, Danny, Ed, Bill, Kerry, Antonio, Joe, Darrell. Guests: Paula Taylor, Chris Taylor

Minutes

- March meeting accepted via electronic meeting.

Continued on page 5

Lone Star Region Board Minutes

(continued from page 5)

- April-May 2004 missing minutes signed statement submitted by Mark V.B. to Antonio.

Treasury Report

- Balance report
- Upcoming cash requirements
- Signing authority updated
- Inventory—Danny and Cliff have inventory sheets and with trailer inventory in May we should have a complete inventory in hand.
- Motion (Cliff) to accept treasurer's report passed.

SOWDIV issues

- More details in May on the draft school proposal.
- Co-op discussion with Jack Turner—Jack is still interested but there's nothing concrete yet.

National Issues

- Temp memberships—we got credit for \$540 in temp. memberships.
- Tax status is still open and Cliff is working on it but it may be that we have to be same status as National.

May Race

- Co-chair still not final. Darrell may do it depending on how his homebuilding is going the next 2 weekends.
- Format presented as discussed by Cliff, Antonio, Danny during working dinner.
- Concern about group size presented and noted.
- Concern about novices wanting two race credits for the weekend presented and noted.
- Motion (Antonio) to accept format as presented passed unanimously.
- TWS Contract—Cliff is still hanging on to it for now pending the food/party issues and Jack is aware that Cliff has the contract.
- Motion (Kerry) to accept pricing structure as presented passed.
- Antonio and Mark to work on the entry form and a more thorough review panel for the entry is needed this time.
- Online registration—After negotiating back and forth with Donovan a \$150 flat fee was agreed upon

- Paula to talk to Hotel about party and also about spontaneous gathering of musicians (no band, no amps, no drums).
- A motion was presented to do Friday registration at the track for the charge of \$15. Passed unanimously.
- Merchandising—we need help staffing sales throughout the weekend. Danny Benzer will get a list of volunteers and he'll come up with a schedule to staff sales for 2hour shifts..
- Coolshirt/ART/Sponsorship marketing—an option was presented to see if the company wants to do a sponsorship, demo, brochures or some combination thereof. Alternative is Ed getting garage space to show the system and to install it.
- Military invitations—this is a widely supported initiative. The possibility to recruit corner workers from the military was also presented. Paula will talk to her contact to get the word out and Cliff will talk to Jim Averett about the possibility of getting temp memberships and getting military personnel on the corner stations to get the best view of the race and to see if they're interested in working stations in the future.
- A motion (Cliff) to expense the dinner cost for the working meeting to determine the format/cost was passed (5 votes)

SRO Report

- Jake Davis didn't show up to the last race so a lot of specialties didn't get their awards (Tech still doesn't have any). At the next race Mark will make sure specialties get awards next race.
- Kerry will present some ideas based on discussions with Paula about how things were done before to promote more of a team environment to attract and retain workers.

Website committee report.

- Ed talked about the conference and stated it wasn't very applicable to what we need except for some presentation on credit card companies and fraud. There are companies out there that will do the credit card service for about the same cost per transaction as paypal but without the aggravation and without the need to manage it ourselves or have to buy expensive shopping cart software. Ed will present something more formal later since he was unable to this past week due to the burglary of his shop.
- We still need an advertising rate card for the website. The previous rate info that was submitted was based on a main page banner so a new one will be needed based on a classifieds page. Committee to work on this rate card.

Continued on page 6

Lone Star Region Board Minutes (continued from page 5)

Draft

- Antonio to send out minutes by Monday April 11
- Motion (Cliff) to have a rotating column (tentatively titled "My Turn") by each board member in addition to regular columns. Passed. Antonio will do first column for May Draft.
- Mailing list—There was a motion to have 3 issues with a warning that after that a post card would be mailed out to notify that Draft will be available online unless a hard copy is requested.

General meeting.

- There was discussion on whether to hold one and when. Obstacles include a busy month of May on the race calendar.
- Decided that the best is to hold a combined board and general meeting. Time and place to be discussed later.

All other issues to be tabled until the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Antonio Garza
Lone Star Region Secretary

E-DRAFT—coming soon!

Yes, watch your mailbox—the DRAFT will be coming to you in electronic form soon! It's already posted on the web (check out the color photos—www.lonestarscca.org!) and we're hoping to transition members to the electronic version in the next 2-3 months. We realize not all our members have internet access—don't worry, we will accommodate your request for a hardcopy version! Questions? Contact Paula Taylor (racemom13@hotmail.com or 512-338-4008).

Look what's



\$5 each or 3 for \$12:

Koozies



Water Bottles



Lanyards



Lone Star Region merchandise will be available at the May race—check at Registration Friday evening or in the Drivers Lounge throughout the weekend!! Support your region—get your koozie, water bottle, or lanyard (great for keeping up with your credentials and photo IDs!) soon!

What the heck is Autocross?

You might have noticed in the newsletter that there is some information regarding an SCCA Divisional to be hosted by the Texas Spokes Sports Car Club and the Lone Star Region SCCA and wondered how did THAT get in our newsletter? What is autocross?



Simply put, autocross (the SCCA refers to it as Solo II) is time trials run on a unique course laid out with traffic cones, typically averaging around 60 seconds in length. The idea is to negotiate the course as quickly as possible while not hitting any of the cones. Sounds simple enough right? Not exactly. It doesn't take much skill to negotiate the course without hitting cones. Doing it quickly is another thing altogether.

One way to explain it in comparison to road racing is that in autocross everything is compressed. The course is compressed and maneuvers (turns) are compressed, meaning things come at you in rapid succession, particularly with slaloms. The time window that you have to make a decision is very narrow and any small mistake is costly.

Staying with the road racing comparison, imagine that when you go racing, each time you see a completely different track, it's never the same. Also imagine that there are no practice sessions, you are not allowed to drive the track. You can however walk the track and learn as much as you can, checking the surface for grip and any bumps that might upset the car, or looking for turns that are off-camber or on camber, or perhaps braking zones that are downhill.

Then the competition begins. You pull up to the starting lights and when the starter waves you go, as quickly as you can and as well as you can, and it better be good because you only get one lap. If you make a mistake you hope that you still have runs left and can correct it on the next one. Higher level events (divisionals, national tour and nationals) are typically three runs each day, with the course being run in the opposite direction the second day. With local events you might have anywhere from three to eight runs. The key point is that you only go around once each time so chances to make up for errors are very slim.

Many of the dynamics involved with road racing are also present in autocross. The best example I can think of is the tires and tire pressures. The serious autocrossers will experiment with pressures and during an event are always checking pressures in between runs and some even check temperatures across the tread. And it's not unusual for someone to spend several thousand dollars for tires over the course of a season.

Alignment (camber, caster, toe) are very important and can make a big difference, as well as the choice of sway bars and settings. And then there is the suspension. Folks running in stock classes have been known to spend a couple thousand dollars (or more) for a set of shocks.

The classes that the SCCA defines for autocrossing are as fair as can be expected and are definitely diverse. It runs the gamut from stock cars like Miatas running on R compounds to cars shedding weight and using independent throttle bodies to fully blown race cars running big fat slicks and spitting out 600-700HP to open-wheeled cars like Formula Fords. It can be expensive and it is most assuredly competitive. And it is unique in that it's probably the only sport where on a given day a stock Miata can be competitive with a Z06.

You may have heard about Spokes, the club has been around since 1951 and is dedicated to autocrossing. What you may not know is that many of us are SCCA members and that the club fields as many drivers at the higher levels of competition as any other club/organization in the country, if not more. In Austin there are some of the best drivers in the country. We have quite a few past or current national champions and I'm sure that trend will continue. We may participate in a sport you don't know much about but we do represent the Lone Star Region very well at the national level.

Is autocross different from road racing? You betcha, but is also a lot of fun. And yes, the seat time is a little light but that time is intense. If you have an off weekend and want to see what autocrossing is all about I hope you'll come see us. Information is posted on our web site - <http://www.spokes.org>.

If you do decide to visit us ask for me and I'll make sure you get the grand tour.

Greg Ward
President
Texas Spokes Sports Car Club



Jack Puryear, *Digital Race Photography* (www.digitalracephotography.com), caught Lone Star Region's Tom Dalrymple and Bill Johnson in the heat of battle at the April Fool's National Race at TWS, April 3. YOU SHOULD SEE THIS IN COLOR! Oh, wait, you can – check out the April DRAFT online (www.lonestarscca.org) – and if you'd like to get your newsletter EARLIER AND IN COLOR, let us know – send a note to lonestarregion@hotmail.com!

**Lone Star Region
Sports Car Club of America
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Coming soon—The DRAFT in
COLOR!! Watch for a postcard
announcement soon!!
www.lonestarscca.org